

C-22-b. Policy: Maintain and enhance, as feasible, Community Sanitation's efforts toward litter clean-up and abatement of trash stockpiles on public and private streets.

C-22-c. Policy: Pursue funding for, and support of, building facade improvement programs to refurbish older commercial districts.

C-22-d. Policy: Continue and expand the city's effective Graffiti Abatement Program.

- Maintain city restrictions on spray paint sales to minors, and continue to work with Fresno County in an effort to get a parallel county ordinance.
- Direct resources to support an appropriate number of graffiti abatement vehicles to allow this vandalism to be obliterated within 24 to 48 hours.

D. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT

Challenges

The purpose of the Economic Development Element is to present an economic vision for the city and to establish the objectives and policy framework within which this vision can be achieved, including specific implementation actions. The goal of economic development is to create an environment that will enable businesses to operate competitively and successfully, thereby providing the means for all citizens of the community to continually increase their standard of living. Successful business development requires the building and maintenance of several key economic foundations, including availability of a skilled labor force, access to capital, adaptable technology and research, a modern infrastructure, competitive tax and regulatory policies, and an attractive quality of life.

Because the creation of such an environment is beyond the sole control of the city, it is essential that the city make a concerted effort to form partnerships with the business community. Economic development is primarily a function of private-sector transactions in a free-market system. Fresno businesses will be the primary sources of information on the competitive position of their businesses and how that competitive position might be improved. This will require a more extensive and intensive partnership between the public and private sectors than is usually achieved.

Government has a lead role in ensuring that critical economic foundations are in place. Government can also focus its business expansion and attraction efforts on firms that show the most promise for contributing to the employment and income base. This will require a significant degree of collaboration between public- and private-sector institutions in identifying deficiencies in critical economic foundations, reaching consensus on their mitigation, and collaborating to secure the necessary financing for improvements. A general platform of requirements is:

- Workers must be educated and trained to exercise judgment and apply critical problem-solving skills to continually changing market demands.

- Investment capital must be available that meet the needs of businesses at specific points in their evolution.
- Technology and research must be geared to meeting production schedules and market demands of firms looking to break into new markets.
- Infrastructure plans and investment must fit the requirements of growing business clusters.
- Taxes, fees, regulations, and permit processes must not impair the ability of firms to equal or exceed the product of their competitors.
- The amenities and conditions associated with an attractive quality of life must meet the expectations of a higher skilled labor force.

These resources are the foundation on which firms do business today. The lack of appropriate foundations for businesses growing in Fresno and those that will join them in the future will impair their competitive position, rendering them less successful than they might otherwise be.

Direction

The Fresno metropolitan area is destined to be a major center of business and employment growth in the 21st Century. It will be the commercial hub of the nine-county San Joaquin Valley due to continued transformation of the agricultural sector to a more mature "Agricultural Business Cluster." A "business cluster" encompasses all businesses participating in the chain of production and features a full range of value-adding products and services through processing, packaging, distribution, business services, transportation and utilities, research and development, and finance, real estate and insurance. Full maturity will be achieved when most of the products and services required by the business cluster are available and obtained from firms operating in Fresno County.

In addition to agriculture, other emerging and growing business clusters will play a significant role in contributing to the local employment base and the standard of living. Most of these businesses will involve high value-added activities that require significant capital investment and the availability of skilled labor. The emerging business clusters will have their own unique requirements, but they will also draw on many of the economic foundations that already support the Agricultural Business Cluster. Their ability to compete for market share and higher sales will depend on the quality of local and regional resources.

The shift toward increased productivity in the city's economic base will boost income, revenue, and profit levels. In turn, existing local-serving businesses will benefit due to increased consumer purchasing power. Expanded market opportunities will also attract new local-serving businesses, thus increasing the variety and value of goods and services available. Moreover, growth in the local-serving sector will provide additional entry-level employment to absorb the pool of available lesser skilled labor.

The vision, therefore, is of an economy composed of globally competitive and growing business clusters capable of generating increased income to residents, businesses, and public institutions, thus raising the standard of living for all segments of the community. Achieving this vision will require adoption and implementation of a market-driven, industry-led strategy to economic development with government playing a facilitating role in building and maintaining economic foundations. The

Economic Development Element provides a statement of commitment on the part of the city to support policies and implementation tasks which move the city toward realization of this vision.

Implementation tasks of the Economic Development Element will require city staff to identify, organize, and support businesses as they emerge in the valley, as well as monitor conditions which impede or enhance regional competitiveness. The city staff must also facilitate regular interchanges between business representatives and institutions responsible for developing and maintaining critical economic foundations. In addition, it will be the further responsibility of the city to implement initiatives included in the Economic Development Element including establishment of benchmarks, evaluation of accomplishments of each initiative, and revision of approaches consistent with the findings of the evaluation.

Local education and training institutions also play a prominent role in economic development. The business cluster strategy will enable them to target the requirements of the overall cluster in terms of skills, rather than narrowly defined occupations. This has the advantage of developing and upgrading capabilities of all job seekers. However, such a perspective will require a shift in the mission of education and training institutions from one which sees the trainee as the client to one which views the job-provider as the client.

Businesses that make up the city's economic base are closely linked with many other businesses throughout the San Joaquin Valley. Since these business-to-business linkages will continue and increase in importance during the coming decades, it is imperative that the city fully participate in efforts to ensure the continued vitality of the San Joaquin Valley economy. Therefore, a major objective in the Economic Development Element is to increase the level of collaboration for economic growth among the many public institutions and local governments having jurisdiction over the provision and maintenance of the economic foundations which support business competitiveness and employment growth throughout the San Joaquin Valley.

Relationship to General Plan Goals

The Economic Development Element formulates a number of objectives, policies, and implementation actions to strengthen the city's economic well-being. It promotes many of the community goals established by the general plan, and has particular relevance to the following:

- Goal 1. Enhance the quality of life for the citizens of Fresno and plan for the projected population within the moderately expanded Fresno urban boundary in a manner which will respect physical, environmental, fiscal, economic, and social issues.
- Goal 2. Pursue coordinated regional planning with Fresno and Madera Counties and the City of Clovis.

Goal 13. Plan for a healthy business and diversified employment environment, and provide adequate timely services to ensure that Fresno is competitive in the market place.

Goal 16. Work cooperatively with the local agricultural industry to conserve prime farmland and respect its importance as Fresno County's base economic resource.

D-1. OBJECTIVE: The city, in collaboration with public- and private-sector entities in the community, will develop and maintain a comprehensive economic development strategy for achieving the objectives as set forth in the Economic Development Element of the Fresno General Plan and will update this strategy on an annual basis.

D-1-a. Policy: Fully implement the policies and strategies of the Fresno Empowerment Zone as awarded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development in January, 2002, pursuant to the Strategic Plan and Application for Empowerment Zone (Round III) dated September 28, 2001.

- Promote the federal tax benefits plan for businesses (TIUP-Tax Incentive Utilization Plan) enabled by the Empowerment Zone designation.
- Monitor and continually pursue the goals of the Fresno Renaissance Zone (FREZ-the identified areas of the urban core designated as an Empowerment Zone) as affirmed by resolution of the city council on September 4, 2001.
- Emphasize business development and/or expansion in the identified "Developable Sites" of the Fresno Renaissance Zone.

D-1-b. Policy: Create conditions conducive to attract, retain, and expand businesses.

- Provide the support necessary to assist established Fresno businesses in expanding.
- Encourage aggressive recruitment efforts to identify and attract those businesses to the city which are complementary to established businesses.
- Create conditions that will allow Fresno firms to adapt to new market conditions and remain in business.

D-1-c. Policy: Encourage the development of basic education and employment training programs reflecting the requirements of new, existing, and expanding Fresno businesses.

D-1-d. Policy: Provide information to assist existing, expanding, and prospective businesses in gaining access to organizations that offer financing programs.

D-1-e. Policy: Encourage available and appropriate public- and private-sector research and technologies that will help maintain the competitive position in the Fresno area.

D-1-f. Policy: Encourage a business climate which fosters a level playing field in relation to their competitors in other comparable locations with respect to the cost of land, taxes, regulations, improvements, and fees.

D-1-g. Policy: Develop, maintain, and support transportation, communications, public service, energy, water, and waste disposal systems that meet the needs of businesses.

- Work with business representatives to identify their priority infrastructure needs.
- Encourage available and appropriate public- and private-sector investments in capital improvements that are related to meeting these needs.

D-1-h. Policy: Maintain and enhance the availability and location of recreation, open space, entertainment, safety, affordable housing, public transportation, and other amenities required to attract, retain, and expand a vital Fresno business sector.

D-2. OBJECTIVE: Ensure that economic development policies and programs are producing desired results.

D-2-a. Policy: Quantifiable benchmarks should be identified to monitor and measure the progress of economic development programs.

D-2-b. Policy: Monitor changes in the economic base on a regular basis to identify positive and negative trends in the performance and mix of businesses in the city.

D-2-c. Policy: Maintain a detailed description of the economic base of the city and metropolitan statistical area which identifies businesses by type of firm, number of employees, total payroll, and location, and make this database available to all interested parties for an appropriate fee that covers cost of preparation and maintenance.

D-2-d. Policy: Submit an annual economic development progress report to the city council. This report will be part of the annual "Status of the General Plan Report," presented by the mayor, including elements such as those presented in the "Fresno Economic Recovery Project" dated September 21, 1999, and the Strategic Plan and Application for Empowerment Zone (Round III) dated September 28, 2001.

D-3. OBJECTIVE: Promote the growth of regional business clusters in the San Joaquin Valley.

D-3-a. Policy: Prepare recommendations on regional collaboration for consideration and approval by the mayor and the Fresno City Council within six months of the adoption of the Economic Development Element of the General Plan.

D-3-b. Policy: Support efforts for regional economic development collaboration.

D-3-c. Policy: Host periodic valley-wide economic development summits.

E. PUBLIC FACILITIES ELEMENT

Challenges

One of the most fundamental responsibilities of the city is to ensure provision of adequate public facilities that will support the existing city as well as projected growth. Public facilities and services impacted by population growth and urban development include circulation and public transportation; sewage collection and treatment facilities; public water supply; storm water drainage and flood control facilities; law enforcement and fire protection; parks and recreation; schools; and solid waste disposal. Other services and facilities include the criminal justice system; health and welfare; and, library services as well as other cultural amenities. Many of these areas of concern are not within the purview of the City of Fresno but are factors which must be cooperatively addressed through regional and intergovernmental efforts identified elsewhere by the general plan. Continued urban development within the urban boundary established by the 1983 Joint Resolution on Metropolitan Planning and the expanded urban boundary of the 2025 Fresno General Plan will necessitate new or expanded facilities and increased service capacities.

Direction

1. Transportation/Streets and Highways. The private motor vehicle (passenger automobile and truck) has continued to be the most responsive and popular means of moving people and goods within the central California region and Fresno's metropolitan area. Although substantial efforts will be made to strengthen alternative modes of transportation, it will continue to be necessary to provide adequate street capacity for newly developing areas and to pursue the expansion of deficient components of the existing street circulation system. Although the Fresno County Transportation Authority Measure "C" Expenditure Plan provides for the construction of most of the freeway system by the year 2010, the completed system is projected to be deficient in the number of freeway lanes and the capacity of access ramps to adequately serve projected vehicle traffic increases.